

FOREIGN DEPARTMENT

IN CHARGE OF

LAVINIA L. DOCK



ORGANIZATION NOTES

THE PROGRESS OF REGISTRATION

THE Dutch Nursing Association held its twelfth annual general meeting in Amsterdam during the past summer, and heard the reports from several committees—viz., on a Provident Fund and Pension Fund, on the editing of the association's journal, on a library for nurses, and on the subject of trained nursing for the army. It appears that the Minister of War for Holland totally and entirely disapproves of women nurses for the army, so for the time being that is turned down.

The most weighty subject and the one that aroused most discussion was the report of the committee on the training and examinations of men and women nurses. It would appear that the same chaotic condition as regards the teaching and practice of nurses exists in Holland as elsewhere, varying from a good general three-years' course in large hospitals down to the small and special hospitals, and to no hospital training at all. There is some demand for State regulation, but the majority is opposed to it, and the council of the association has come out in the negative on the ground that it would tend to restrict an advance in good methods, as training is in a state of development, and they fear it would act "as a tight corset." As they realize that some regulation should be introduced, but are afraid of legislation, the association is going to try to introduce some order into nursing education voluntarily through its own influence. The committee made the following recommendations:

That there should be preliminary training in practical domestic matters given in all hospitals, municipal as well as private. (Such preliminary teaching is already given in several hospitals but is not general.) That by the influence of the association one or more such preliminary schools should be erected. (This excellent proposition was rejected, probably for financial reasons.) That probationers should not be admitted under twenty years of age and that three-years' training should be the rule, of which at least two must be spent in one and the same hospital. That there should not be too many lectures, but that the teaching should be practical and given in part by the matron and head nurses.

The committee then presented a scheme for defining a curriculum for the whole country which will qualify the nurse for presenting herself for examination. The examination will take place in different parts of Holland, and the certificate given will be the only one to be recognized. The present awarding of special diplomas, as for obstetrics, mental nursing, etc., will be superseded by the new certificate for general work.

The Dutch Nursing Association shall convene all the representatives of now existing hospital and Examining Boards, with a view to arriving at a definite basis. A working committee from the association was suggested, one of whom may be a nurse (either man or woman), and upon the Examining Boards it is suggested there shall be one nurse.

All of this scheme appears to have been enthusiastically approved by the annual meeting, and it will probably be put into practice as fast as time allows. It seems to be a step in the right direction, and although the representation given to the nurses seems small to us, yet considering the dominant power of the masculine hierarchies in these good old-fashioned lands it may be considered a marvel that there should be even one!

The movement seems to be very similar to that in Australia under the Victorian Nurses' Association, which has worked well and seems likely to lead to State regulation. The Victorian Association has created a very satisfactory system of voluntary examination and certification under a conjoint board of medical men and hospital matrons.

In the last annual report it was stated that the different training-schools had responded in a gratifying way to the requirements of the board and, with but few exceptions, were sending up their pupils for the central examination.

In outlining the work for the coming year the council recommends a preliminary educational test and the establishment of a special course for future matrons, among other advances.

Dr. Moore, of the Board of Examiners, in a short address said: "Personally, I would be in favor, if it could be accomplished, of State registration. That would accord to the nursing profession a legitimate status that it could not otherwise secure. The profession will always be subject to the inroads of the unregistered nurse unless the members of this association get a legal status by State registration."

THE GERMAN NURSES' ASSOCIATION

THE education of the nurse of the future has been discussed in the two recent meetings of the German Nurses' Association. The winter season was opened by a paper on this subject by Dr. Eugen Israel, a

young, liberal, and progressive physician and the chief defender of the nurse's movement—a modern medical knight-errant. He had thought out for himself, before informing himself of the conditions in other countries, an excellent and practical three-year curriculum, conditions and details as to State examination, etc., which he read at the first meeting. He advocates a preliminary education at least equal to (in American conditions) one year of High-School work; preparatory practical work before taking up actual ward nursing; grading of work and responsibility from easy to difficult; teaching of practice by nurses and of theory by physicians; a three-years' nursing course; a sensible and practical scheme for examinations, and State registration. He considers it essential that the State authorities should classify the hospitals as being suitable for training, and would have small hospitals utilized thus in the latter part of the course, when the pupil has more individual responsibility. He also advocates post-graduate training on a systematic basis, to be also under State supervision, definite, and free to the nurse.

At the second meeting Miss Dock described American conditions, showing that our foremost schools have actually worked out schemes of preliminary work and professional training such as Dr. Israel desires for Germany; that post-graduate work was to some extent available, and that State registration had begun.

A pleasant incident of the evening was the announcement to the members that a long-wished clubroom with officers was to be opened in April, and that the Editor-in-Chief of *THE AMERICAN JOURNAL OF NURSING* had donated a complete bound set of *JOURNALS* as a contribution to its library.

THE GENERAL HOSPITAL IN VIENNA

THE Allgemeinen Krankenhaus of Vienna has long been one of the celebrated hospitals of the world as a school and centre of medical education. It is a vast caravansary, containing about three thousand beds. Externally it is a most dreary, jail-like looking building, built like military barracks, in long, two-story buildings which run the entire length of city blocks, and those, too, of greater extent than we are accustomed to see.

But once within this jail one finds with amazement a beautiful, green, luxurious park, with massive trees, soft turf, and numerous seats, and, wandering on, one's amazement increases to find eight more smaller, but still spacious, green squares, opening one from another, around which the old barrack-like wards are built solidly. In this plan it resembles the great general hospital of Milan, which is also built around

nine great open squares. However, the Milan hospital, while equally bad in many ways, is a model of beautiful Renaissance architecture externally which does not prevent it from being very unsatisfactory from a professional stand-point, though pleasing to the eye. I was most desirous of seeing the nursing arrangements of this famous old Austrian hospital. Among my earliest nursing recollections was that of hearing the Bellevue internes laugh at the women attendants there—"bolsters with strings tied around the middle," as they described them. Burdette's "*Hospitals of the World*," so full of details of many institutions, could only say of this one in regard to the nursing, that "As it had no system, its system could not be described," and its enormous size, its fame as a medical school, its dreary, jail-like aspect on the streets, and its bewildering variety of nine great park-like squares within, full of the richest green, made it a most interesting problem. Visitors to the patients were admitted every afternoon, and under cover of the swarms of relatives and friends I wandered about by myself, on several different days, and talked to the nurses.

It is not true that they have no "system." They have one, but it is about as bad as it can be. It is a system of twenty-four-hour duty, alternating with a second twenty-four hours of what they call "*Bei-Dienst*," a sort of half-and-half duty, of patients taking their own temperatures, etc. For instance, let me describe one ward where I found a very decent and respectable-looking woman sitting at the table in the centre of the ward. She was middle-aged, plain, and dressed in a calico dress with apron, no cap or any attempt at uniform, just the garb of a decent working woman. She looked worn and thin, but her face was passably good and honest. The ward was a long one, about forty beds, and there were two nurses, herself and another woman, assigned to it.

One came on duty at seven A.M., and remained on continuously for twenty-four hours. The other one then came on, and the first one was relieved from full duty, but now her "*Bei-Dienst*" began. That is, she had now to carry the soiled clothes to the laundry, bring up fresh linen for the day, and at eleven o'clock she had to bring her own and the other nurse's dinner, as the one who is on full duty is not supposed to leave the ward. She then had the afternoon to sleep, and at five she went for the supper for herself and colleague. She then had the night. At seven A.M. she went on full duty for the next twenty-four hours, and the other one assumed the "*Bei-Dienst*." At each end of the ward was a cubicle, not built *off* the ward, but *in* the ward, occupying ward floor space, and with its wooden partition walls reaching about half-way to the ceiling. These were the nurses' rooms. I asked if I might look at one, and the nurse I was talking with showed me hers. It was just big enough to hold

a bed, a small bureau, a small table, and a chair. On the table was the plate with the remains of her dinner, which the other nurse at five would carry away when she went for the supper. I asked her if she slept at night, and she replied that she did not, that they were not allowed to, as temperatures and medicines had to be taken and given at night. However, poor soul, though she is not supposed to be allowed to sleep I was perfectly certain that she did, for how could she help it?

For this work they receive sixteen gulden a month, or about six dollars and a half, and their food. She declared this was much better than a few years ago, when they received only twelve gulden and not all their food. So it seems that there is some progress even in the *Allgemeinen Krankenhaus*. I asked if there was an "Oberin," or woman head of nurses, and she said no, they were all engaged by the superintendent (director) of the hospital and were under his orders. By the way, there are no men nurses in the wards; even in the male wards, she told me, all nurses are women.

No organization at all exists among them. I asked her why all the nurses did not agree among themselves to ask for shorter working hours and to stand by one another, and she smiled a feeble smile and said it would be a long time before they could do that. Poor thing, she was perfectly meek, passive, and timid, glad only to be allowed to live. She took tips as a matter of course, just as a waiter does, for several of the patients' friends as they went out put money into her hand, as if it was the regulation thing to do.

I thought it a most illuminating and instructive object-lesson. Here is this famous hospital, entirely under the control of men, whose brains certainly place them in the front rank. They teach medicine to students from all over the world; they order the hospital to suit themselves; they regulate the nursing, not interfered with by any women managers or superintendent of nurses; they have everything the way they wish it to be, and this is it!

In some few of the wards I found religious sisters in charge, and could not find out any reason why. Their hours are the same, but they do not sleep in cubicles in the wards. Whether they are being gradually withdrawn, or whether they are preferred for special work, I could not learn either from themselves or from the lay nurses, who, however, are greatly in the majority.

In one ward where I stopped to ask questions a male convalescent patient came sauntering in and took out a thermometer from his axilla, though no one could possibly have supposed that there was one there. He examined it and then went over to his bed and wrote the result on his chart, afterwards handing it to another patient! I spoke of this, and

the sister said he had been in the hospital a long time. But I could not see why any of the patients should have anything but normal or sub-normal temperatures under this system.

The wards looked clean and orderly, though bare, and were painted in clean, light colors, and though the furniture was plain and homely there seemed to be plenty of glass jars and appliances for everything the doctors had to do. Everything necessary for clinical work was there in abundance.

A striking and unpleasant feature of this hospital was the unrestrainedly free and easy way in which the convalescent patients and their friends mingled in the green, park-like courts. There seemed no privacy or supervision. In the obstetrical division the waiting women sat on the garden benches and strolled about, and men employés and visitors strolled through and sat about. Young girl convalescents wandered at will through the nine courts, sat on benches with the men, and frolicked, and even love-making was going on. As all convalescents wore gowns of heavy white linen they were quite conspicuous and it was impossible to mistake them.

The numbers of young girls among them filled one with amazement. It was impossible to understand why so many girls of sixteen and seventeen, apparently quite well enough to go home, should be kept in the hospital. Groups of them would wander to the great main entrance-gate, through which the visitors came, but here, when they became too giggling and noisy, a guard did make some attempt at discipline by chasing them periodically with a cane.

The whole thing was dreadful. But this hospital exists solely for scientific research and the study of clinical material. Within the wards strict order and discipline were maintained outwardly, but the moral atmosphere, the spirit of guardianship of the feeble and the young, the feeling of security given by the presence of women of character and education, were entirely lacking. So far as I had gone over Europe it was the worst that I had seen.

L. L. D.



THE pharmacists of Germany put up prescriptions which are to be given by drops in a very trig and convenient little bottle which has a glass, tight-fitting stopper with a dropper made in it, so that all one has to do is to tilt the bottle, perhaps loosen the stopper a little to get a little air-pressure, and let the drops fall. It is a most cleanly and dainty little device. If American pharmacists are not already using it, they would do well to adopt it.